

Retired art teacher won honors

BY MILDRED BENSON

BLADE STAFF WRITER

Patricia Grafton Thomas, 75, of Deepwood Lane, a retired Toledo elementary arts teacher, died of cancer yesterday in her home.

Previously hospitalized for three weeks, she recently had been under hospice care, said her husband, Lewis, a chemical engineer and retired laboratory manager for Sun Oil Co.

Mrs. Thomas taught art and language arts more than 20 years in the Toledo Public Schools, retiring in the 1980s from Byrnedale Junior High School. Earlier, she had taught at Newbury, Eastside Central, and Harvard schools.

During her career, she won many honors for her educational and personal accomplishments and was listed in several biographical *Who's Who* books.

Known not only for her teaching ability, she was honored for starting one of the first national toy-lending libraries in Columbia, Mo. She also served on grammar, reading, and spelling curricula committees in Toledo and was a former junior high council president.

She attended Stephens College, Purdue University, and Oberlin College, graduating magna cum laude in education from the University of Toledo. It was during her student days at Stephens in 1938 that she started the first national toy-lending library, family members recalled.

She received an Adolf Dehn watercolor fellowship and a post-graduate education fellowship at Bowling Green State University. Education memberships included Phi Kappa Phi, Kappa Delta Pi, Pi Lambda Theta, and Delta Kappa Gamma. She had been president of the latter two, her husband said.

Mrs. Thomas belonged to the Toledo Symphony League, Toledo Artists Club, Toledo Museum of Art, St. Paul's Episcopal Church, the Toledo Club, Rockwell Springs Trout Club, and many other area organizations. She also was a board member of Spectrum.

Married for 57 years, Mrs. Thomas was devoted to her grandchildren, who honored the couple with a big party on their golden wedding anniversary.

"She always started planning Christmas gifts a year ahead," Mr. Thomas said. "She painted hundreds of miniatures she gave to family members and her many friends each holiday season."

Mrs. Thomas specialized in portrait painting and completed a number of commercial assignments in her career.

"She was a lady of dignity and grace," said Laura Pawuk, a granddaughter. "She took genuine interest in everyone who entered her life."

Also surviving are daughters Linda Collins, Stephanie Pawuk, Deborah Preissler, and Kathryn Ramsey, and six grandchildren.

A memorial service is set for 11:30 a.m. Nov. 16 in St. Paul's Episcopal Church in Maumee. Friends will be received in the church's parish hall afterward. Arrangements are by the Bersticker-Scott Funeral Home.

The family requests tributes to the St. Paul's remembrance fund, the symphony league's remembrance fund, or Northwest Ohio Hospice Association.